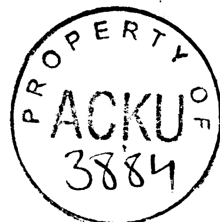
PVO PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES IN AFGHANISTAN



Report prepared by Dr.
Lynn Carter on behalf of
the Cooperative Committee
of PVOs working in
Afghanistan

Final Version
2 February 1988

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

ARC	-	Austrian Relief Committee
BIA	-	Bureau International Afghanistan
CFF	-	Cash for Food
IRC	-	International Rescue Committee
PVO	-	Private and Voluntary Organization
SCA	-	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
USAID	-	U.S. Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Almost all the PVOs included in this report began providing humanitarian assistance inside Afghanistan through the vehicle of an emergency war assistance program which sent funds for food, blankets, clothing and house repairs. Most of these agencies have had three or four years of experience and some have had as much as eight years of experience in operating inside Afghanistan. They have well established contacts and relationships with the Afghan resistance.

For the first several years, war conditions only permitted efforts directed at relieving the extreme misery of the population by sending funds for necessities. It was only feasible to send cash, and the primary need identified was for food; hence such assistance came to be called "Cash for Food." The point of this assistance was to relieve suffering, prevent additional illnesses and deaths, and give the population adequate short-term sustenance to prevent the creation of still more displaced persons.

A three agency initiative to provide emergency assistance to Logar following the heavy fighting this autumn shows that the PVOs can provide help quickly. A contract to provide aid was signed ten days after the fighting had ceased. The assistance was useful in giving those who had lost everything in the bombardments the means to stay in their village. In a similar case, following the Soviet carpet-bombing of Nangarhar in late 1986, the Swedish Committee promptly sent in Rs. 100,000 (a little over $5,000) for the victims.

It took some time to put into place the complicated systems necessary to implement relief efforts in the midst of war but, once established, some agencies began to earmark some part of their resources for reconstruction. Afrane, for example, was in 1982 one of the first organizations to begin providing agricultural equipment. In 1985, the Austrian Relief Committee and Bureau International Afghanistan, which do not give food aid, initiated agricultural development projects in different areas in the southern part of the country. Three organizations, Afrane and the Swedish and Norwegian Committees, encourage commanders to use food aid funds to pay for labor on rural public works and for similar activities that might benefit the community in a more lasting manner.

The introduction of Stinger missiles gave rural populations in some areas more security and allowed the renewal of a measure of economic activity. It then became possible to channel a greater amount of assistance in a more productive fashion. The PVOs recognized this change and began providing agricultural assistance in the form of equipment (threshers, tractors and pumps), animals, seed and fertilizer. They also

began supporting the cleaning and repair of irrigation systems. Afghanaid has conceptualized this as "village assistance," which has as its objective meeting those needs that will solve village problems to prevent displacement.

All the PVOs involved in CFF now spend an increasing amount of funds on reconstruction activities, and all are interested in continuing to increase the relative share of funds spent for such activities. They believe, however, that there is still a place for CFF as part of a package of emergency war assistance. It is difficult to help the more remote areas or those under serious military pressure except with an infusion of cash. Monitoring of any more complicated activities would pose serious problems. In areas of heavy military activity, reconstruction efforts are impossible -crops are firebombed, agricultural and other equipment destroyed, and draught animals killed. There are also those whom it would be difficult to help in any other fashion -displaced persons with no assets, widows and children, the handicapped and the aged. Such individuals, who often cannot afford to flee to Pakistan, can be a drain on the limited productive resources of an area.

For the most part, the PVOs work through local commanders, who are usually the key to entering an area. They need local level contacts who can help them organize their work. Generally, a commander or his representative comes to the organization asking for assistance. Most PVOs insist that he bring a letter of introduction from his party. The PVOs investigate the feasibility of providing assistance (this involves vetting the commander and corroborating the information he has given about his area) and then negotiate a contract. Most of the PVOs give a small first donation. If the local administration proves that it can handle that amount responsibly and provide the necessary documents, then the amount is increased the next time.

The degree to which individual PVOs work with the Alliance or the parties in Peshawar varies. Some, such as Afrane, have very close links. Others have some connections with the Peshawar-based parties and operate with party concurrence. The Norwegian Committee informs the appropriate party after assistance has been provided to a commander. The Swedish Committee follows a similar practice particularly on the medical side. The Norwegians also maintain links with the Alliance Health Committee for information exchange. All depend on the party leaders for letters of safe passage. The PVOs certainly support the Alliance's attempt to bring a unified voice to the Afghan resistance. However, they believe that if they are placed in the middle of the political maneuvering carried on by the parties of the Alliance in Peshawar, their effectiveness would suffer badly. None channels resources directly through the Alliance or party personnel in Peshawar.

Often the PVOs work with village elders and sometimes local committees and shuras, where these exist and are functional. These are mainly civilian structures that sometimes exist alongside the military structures run by the commanders. The Austrian Relief Committee has helped organize agricultural shuras in two provinces, while the Norwegian Committee works with a pre-existing agricultural committee in a third. In the north, Afghanaid is working with a self-initiated committee of village leaders who are investigating ways in which Afghanaid might assist their community. Guilde du Raid teams typically meet with a community jirga to decide on appropriate use of CFF and emergency funds. The situation is very fragmented, and it is not possible to make any generalizations about civilian authorities or committees and their relationships with the military structure in an area. The possibilities range from areas which have committees established to deal with specific subjects (Commander Massoud has set up an agriculture committee with professional agronomists but this is the exception) to areas where religious personnel may be the only "civilian" authorities and the commander is not interested in non-military matters.

Many of the PVOs rely on expatriate missions to assess needs, provide the agreed-upon assistance and monitor the effectiveness of that assistance. The use of expatriates is to some extent a function of the extremely high levels of accountability that some donors demand. As a general rule, the larger the amount of money involved, the more likely the use of an expatriate monitor. Such expatriates have the administrative skills and the impartiality required. The PVOs try to use the same expatriates on different assignments. While there are risks involved, those PVOs that use Westerners believe that they receive better and more reliable information from expatriate observers, and also maintain a greater degree of control over resources, than they would have if they were relying on Afghans. These groups expect to continue to use expatriate teams, together with carefully selected Afghans, to travel inside Afghanistan on various missions.

Other PVOs, such as the Swedish Committee and the Austrian Relief Committee, have been hesitant to use foreigners and have preferred to rely on Afghans. The ARC, because it does not give CFF, does not routinely carry in large sums of money; while the Swedes are reconsidering this policy in the wake of receiving several suspect CFF distribution-to-beneficiaries reports. The SCA has, in any case, at times sent in expatriates.

In the past, some PVOs have shared some information informally with one another. There has been an attempt over the last few months to begin to try to systematize information sharing and to formalize arrangements to work

together. Joint activities, such as combined missions inside Afghanistan, have taken place, and the PVOs have formed a Cooperative Committee with representatives from each organization interested in agriculture and rural development. The committee is addressing issues of common concern, such as training, monitoring and programming. The PVOs, through the vehicle of the Cooperative Committee, are moving to rationalize their efforts, and keep each other well informed so that there is no overlap in their work. As efforts grow, such a strategy will permit broader coverage of the country, and may also allow the PVOs to build up expertise working in a particular environment or on particular types of projects.

The PVOs are small organizations, formed for the most part for helping Afghanistan. They play an important role in keeping their home countries informed about Afghanistan and in acting as a pressure group on their home governments. Several publish magazines and brochures and arrange lectures and conferences on events in Afghanistan.

Four of the agencies included in this report receive funding from USAID, through the mechanism of a subcontract with IRC. Only three of these, Afrane, Afghanaid and Guilde du Raid, are interested in continuing to receive USAID funds. All the PVOs receive money from several different sources and expend some energy on fundraising. Most receive some funds from home governments but also from many different private European groups.

Program size ranges from about $ .5 million to around $3 million per year. The PVO's typically have little funding for overhead and administration, and most have limited technical depth. One organization, Afrane, had until this year no Peshawar staff, and some rely at least in part on volunteers. Some also make use of short-term consultants in specialized fields. Still, they are limited by the number and level of staff positions that can be funded, both at home and in Peshawar. Because of this, they can have problems meeting the requirements of several different donors for documentation. All have tried to be responsive to donor concerns.

PREFACE

In response to concerns expressed by USAID about the appropriateness and effectiveness of PVO activities inside Afghanistan, the Cooperative Committee of PVOs decided to retain the services of Dr. Lynn Carter, a social scientist and evaluation specialist, to review PVO programs dealing with emergency war assistance, including "Cash for Food" (CFF), agriculture and rural development and prepare a report on them. The Cooperative Committee helps coordinate the work of several European and American organizations, and includes those covered in this report: Afghanaid, Afrane, Austrian Relief Committee, Bureau International Afghanistan, Guilde du Raid, the Norwegian Committee, and the Swedish Committee. Only some of these organizations are currently receiving (and wish to continue to receive) USAID funding. The activities of the others, although not at issue as far as USAID is concerned, are included in this report so that USAID and other interested parties can understand the range of programs that PVOs are currently initiating, the parallels between programs, and the problems and limitations that the PVOs share. All the PVOs work under extremely difficult circumstances and have limited options for mounting assistance programs. The PVOs hope in this report to respond to the concerns voiced by USAID representatives about their activities.

I. INTRODUCTION

After nine years of war, Afghanistan's physical infrastructure and rural economy have been shattered. A large portion of the country's arable land is no longer farmed, herds and flocks have been decimated, seed has degenerated, and some agricultural inputs are not easily obtainable. The social fabric has been torn and traditional systems for sustaining irrigation canals and karezes, for example, no longer exist. Rural Afghans have in many cases lost everything and have had to abandon their homes for refuge in more secure areas. There are large numbers of internal refugees and other families without a means of livelihood.

When the PVOs began helping Afghans inside Afghanistan in 1980, the primary need was for survival assistance. People needed goods of the first necessity - food, blankets, clothing, cookware, shelter, fuel and so on. The needs varied from family to family and area to area. It was judged to be feasible only to supply cash to local authorities for distribution to beneficiaries for several reasons:

- The military and political situation did not permit other forms of assistance;

- Giving cash was a way to support local economies. In many areas necessary goods could be purchased, and money introduced into an economy has a multiplier effect;

- Families could spend their grant on what they most needed. One family, for example, might choose to spend part of its grant on shoes, so that fields could be worked in cold weather; and

- The transportation cost of goods from Pakistan would have consumed a large percentage of the total funds available for assistance.

Survival assistance has been carried to regions in most provinces in the country. Most PVOs continue at great risk to take in cash assistance to some of the more remote and seriously pressed provinces. This aid has been effective in helping people survive and in giving them the possibility of staying in their homes.

In the last eighteen months, and particularly following the introduction of Stinger missiles, the political and military situation has stabilized in some parts of the country. This has permitted the initiation of a different kind of program in those areas. The PVOs, accordingly, are now focussing more on reconstruction and development projects. They are supporting agriculture and animal husbandry and are initiating income generating projects in relatively secure areas. In most instances, this still means that they are supplying cash for agricultural inputs and the like. It is, for the most part, not feasible to do otherwise. The PVOs are working with local civilian committees and military authorities to plan and implement such projects. Over the next few years, they expect to undertake such efforts in new areas and to expand existing ones to neighboring populations. Most of the PVOs continue to believe, however, that there is a role for "survival" or emergency war assistance to help those who have lived through Soviet offensives, those who cannot be reached through other means, and finally those waiting for development assistance to help them produce a livelihood.

II. PVO PROGRAMMING

A. "Cash for Food"

1. Objectives and Usefulness of the Program

"Cash for Food" has primarily been used in two instances: 1) as short-term relief following heavy fighting or aerial bombardment in an area; and 2) as a more sustained

program of assistance in badly damaged areas with substantial numbers of internal refugees. It has typically provided cash directly to beneficiaries for the purchase of food or, in some cases, other necessities, or it has provided the cash to local authorities which then purchase food for distribution to beneficiaries. The primary purposes of CFF are to relieve suffering and prevent the creation of additional displaced persons and refugees. It can help keep families from going badly into debt. It can also have an important psychological benefit in a community and can help cement a family's determination to stay on, by showing that others do care about their plight.

Two of the agencies, BIA and ARC, do not give food aid and do not believe that it is the most appropriate use of their resources. They prefer to concentrate their efforts on agricultural development but, as BIA staff note, such efforts require reasonable security and a stable population. This still leaves the question of how to help areas where the requirements of security, stability, a good administration and the like are utterly lacking - these, of course, are some of the more damaged parts of the country.

Given the level of need, the amount of food aid supplied has been meager. This being the case, it is a dilemma whether to concentrate food aid so as to have a greater impact on one population or to scatter it to maintain a balance across the regions and parties. The latter course satisfies political requirements and gives some small level of support to a greater number of individuals, but has less of an effect on any one population.

Most PVOs have supplied CFF to a number of different provinces. The Swedish Committee (SCA) has tried to maintain some balance by providing some aid to almost all provinces. They have divided the country into three levels of need, but are now giving priority to the north of Afghanistan. The Norwegians also try to establish a balance between the parties and across the country. Afghanaid, by contrast, has until recently concentrated most of its CFF assistance in one badly damaged area, the Panjshir.

Most PVO staff believe that supplying funds for food (or other basic necessities such as shelter, clothing, and blankets) will continue to have a place in emergency war situations, where starvation or flight are the only two options. CFF can help anchor the population while the community and resistance reorganize themselves. There are also individuals who can only be helped by welfare assistance. Internal refugees and the traditionally needy (widows, orphans, handicapped, and the aged) may lack even the most basic assets that outside assistance could build on to help make them productive. Customary means of charity have collapsed in some areas. For these people, then, CFF

monies serve a vital need.

CFF can operate in some places as a holding operation while agricultural development and other activities capable of generating local incomes begin. CFF money must then be available to supplement people's livelihood over a span of several months, until a first crop can be harvested. For example, there was some evidence in Province X when the Austrian Relief Committee first began agricultural activities there that some desperate families ate the seed they had received for planting.

Commander Massoud's representative in charge of food aid to the Panjshir argues that the poor and displaced in his area have no real alternative to food aid. To terminate it abruptly without arranging a replacement livelihood, he said, would mean that some would have to leave the area. It will be difficult to develop a satisfactory alternative since only about 15-20% of the region's population is not displaced. He believes that food aid has been critical to people's willingness to remain. It would disrupt the civilian administration and be discouraging to the whole population of the area if people started to leave. To cut this program would, in his view, undermine the resistance. As one of the PVOs pointed out, commanders had been encouraged to look after the needs of the civilian population and set up administrative systems that could routinely dispense assistance. People expect help to continue. To stop such help suddenly could be devastating for the families concerned and could constitute a black mark for the local authorities.

If and when some sort of settlement is achieved in Afghanistan, reconstruction efforts will be easiest in those communities in which population displacement and disruption have been most minimal. Displaced persons are hard to assist (no land and few other resources) and are a burden on other communities. Those in Kabul and other cities may not be easily persuaded to return to their home villages and will present a political problem to a new government whose limited resources will be severely overtaxed. Resources devoted to satisfying the demands of an urban population are more likely to produce a political return than an economic one.

2. Criteria in Allocating CFF monies

All the PVOs are in the unfortunate position of having more requests for assistance than they can reasonably meet. Some are from spurious persons posing as commanders, some are from "commanders" who rarely, if ever, leave Peshawar, and many are legitimate. Once the screening process excludes the unacceptable, there are still too many requests for the amount of money available. The PVOs have tried to allocate funds on the basis of relative need, absorptive capacity (systems in place to distribute the money

as required), ability to document distribution adequately, and rectitude in handling funds. The first question asked is - is the commander honest. If the answer is yes, then the PVOs ask if he has good relations with others in the area, if he is respected and if he has an administrative network, traditional or modern, that can be adapted to distribute and account for assistance. An answer of yes to all of these is one of the main reasons that Commander Ahmad Shah Massoud attracts funding. His administration carried out a census in 1985 and established a list of needy families. The Panjshir was then divided into 22 administrative units, each with a designated representative for civilian aid. This representative keeps the list for his area up-to-date. The overall civilian aid committee is then responsible for delivering CFF and food captured from Soviet convoys to the units. This system works very well and the accountability is good. It can be difficult to provide assistance to areas in which several parties are competing, and some needy areas cannot be helped because no reliable conduit can be found.

The PVOs are generally not in a position to strengthen a commander's administrative organization. They cannot supply technical assistance, and they do not have the funds for institution building. One organization, Afghanaid, does provide office supplies necessary for an aid administration, but this supposes that the proper people exist to man it. Afghanaid is interested in trying to organize some administrative training for those who will have a role in implementing development assistance.

PVO staff spend inordinate amounts of time talking to commanders of every party affiliation and level of strength. This is because the parties routinely refer commanders, whose strength might vary from 25 mujahideen on up, to the agencies as a way of satisfying those they are not in a position to help. Many PVOs are increasingly coming to feel that this is not the most productive use of time. Now that they have spent some years studying the resistance and the situation in different parts of the country, they are in a better position to search out those commanders and civilian populations with whom they wish to work. Guilde du Raid and Afghanaid will no longer routinely receive commanders at its Peshawar office and, along with the others, ares now taking a more pro-active stance in establishing contacts in provinces of interest.

3. Vetting the Local Authorities

All the PVOs carefully vet the commanders to whom they give funds. Commanders usually bring a letter from their party, and sometimes a PVO will check out a commander with party representatives in Peshawar. Guilde du Raid usually sends a team to an area to carry out an investigation and needs assessment before deciding to send in funds. Most

PVOs have Afghan investigators who check in the camps and around Peshawar, to verify the reliability of a commander and the situation in his area. The Swedish Committee's procedure is illustrative: When a commander requests aid, their team of ten investigators asks about him around Peshawar. If the commander clears this vetting process, a series of four, in-depth interviews are held with him about agriculture, population, the political and military system and his front. A decision is then made about providing assistance. The Committee requests the commander to appoint a person responsible for handling the aid. That person comes to Peshawar, learns the documentation procedures and takes back a first grant of Rs. 50,000. Further grants depend on how he accounts for the first grant.

Some degree of protection is also involved in that commanders know that the PVO groups active in Afghanistan share information and that abuses can get them blacklisted for further assistance. These funds are of use not only in maintaining a relatively stable population that can feed the mujahideen but also add to a commander's political strength in his area. In fact, there seems to be a growing competition among commanders for scarce rehabilitation funds. This competition may ensure a certain correctness in the use of such assistance, provided that the donors and PVOs organize to take advantage of it. In addition, Guilde du Raide teams have consistently found that the population knows all about the funds arriving - this must generate considerable pressure on the local authorities to use the money appropriately.

4. Delivery Mechanisms

The PVOs believe that they provide better accountability for the use of funds than other channels that are currently available. They have acted cautiously and responsibly to try to protect their cash inputs, and they are effective in getting the money to the designated party. Cash is either carried in or, where possible, funds are sent via the informal banking system. Amounts sent at any one time vary from a few thousand dollars for a trial grant to a few hundred thousand for repeat grants to trusted commanders. Foreign monitors along with Afghan counterparts are used to carry in cash or to meet transferred funds. The expatriates who go on such missions are chosen very carefully, since they are risking their lives, and many make repeat trips. Approximately 80% of Guilde's team members have made more than one trip inside. Some of the PVOs have been mounting such missions for several years and are very experienced in organizing them to expose their personnel and the funds to minimal risk. Unlike journalists and photographers, they have good intelligence networks and can quickly get information on the current situation in various parts of the country. They are well protected by mujahideen, travelling

with 10-20 armed men, while journalists sometimes go inside with one or two mujahideen and have no way of determining who is reliable and who is not. In the midst of war, however, some level of risk is unavoidable. The more distant the area from Pakistan and the more military pressure it is under, the greater the risk. The SCA generally obtains letters from the party leaders in Peshawar so that it can present these en route for safe passage. It is necessary to know through which party's areas a team is passing. The situation in an area can change very quickly and a route that was safe one week may not be so the next. There have been problems, although perhaps surprisingly few given the environment, and most of those problems have occurred in the last year. A few agencies had difficulties this autumn when a section (Kantiwah) of one of the main routes to the north became dangerous due to what appeared to be an attempt by one of the parties to stop aid going to Commander Massoud. Since these groups were taking aid in at about the same time, before the passes closed, it was not possible for the first PVO attacked to share information with the second attacked in time. In another instance, a French group carrying funds to the north had to pay "tolls" to various resistance groups en route. Competition between the parties is such that missions carrying resources to one party or commander can be threatened by mujahideen belonging to another party. Sometimes, of course, the threat is from the regime. The Swedish Committee lost Rs. 100,000 (a little over $5,000) when a caravan carrying the money was attacked by the Soviets.

These are not problems that apply only to the CFF program but could well trouble reconstruction or development assistance, since PVO projects would supply either cash for inputs or the inputs themselves. Both would still be at risk. The risk is simply a cost of providing any kind of assistance inside Afghanistan.

5. Beneficiaries

For the most part, the PVOs involved in food aid give commanders along with local civilian notables the leeway to determine the list of those families most in need of food aid and how much each family should receive. Guilde du Raid Missions typically meet with a community jirga or committee which decides on distribution. It is difficult to do other than rely on local authorities, although questions do sometimes arise about distribution to beneficiaries. In one province this summer there were, for example, problems with the use of funds donated by Afghanaid. A two person team of expatriates sent to the area in November could find no evidence that the cash had been distributed. It is highly possible that renewed fighting had interfered with the timely distribution of funds. Afghanaid plans to send in another team to resolve this problem. The Swedish Committee

received several reports it considers falsified from southern regions to which it gave funds in 1986. It suspects that it gave money to the wrong commanders because its investigation system, which is Peshawar-based, cannot report with the same thoroughness on those areas that have their natural point of contact with Quetta. If the Swedes had an office and established relationships in Quetta, they would have a better sense of which commanders in the south and west could be trusted.

There are a few instances of PVOs deciding on the villages and families to which funds should go. In Logar this autumn, the PVOs used their own personnel to distribute emergency funds because they believed that in this multiparty area, the parties would insist on an equal division of the monies no matter where the need was strongest. The two individuals sent were both from respected families in the area, but even this has not been trouble-free. Complaints are now being received from the commanders and an investigation will be made into what, if anything, went wrong.

It is possible that beneficiaries could spend their CFF grants on something other than food (or, for some of the PVOs, such as the Swedish Committee, other basic necessities). PVO controls, however, are such that there is considerable insurance that only the neediest families receive this help. These families are in such straightened circumstances, and the grants are sufficiently small that there seems to be little danger that the money would be wasted. Food certainly will come first. In 1985 the SCA asked journalists travelling to the Panjshir to check with a sample of beneficiaries on use of the assistance. The journalists did so and reported that almost all the assistance had been spent on food. In a similar check on Herat in 1986, journalists investigating on behalf of the SCA found that the bulk of the aid had been spent on food, but that some has also been used to buy needed clothing.

6. Monitoring and Reporting

The PVOs have designed procedures that they believe permit them to follow up adequately on the use of those funds. Obviously, in this environment, it is extremely difficult to get accurate detailed information of any kind, and what information is acquired must be handled with extreme discretion, to protect those involved. The PVOs use their Afghan investigators to make inquiries concerning the use of cash grants in the camps. Those inquiries, in conjunction with receipts and an occasional monitoring visit by an expatriate team to check on a sample of recipients, give some assurance that funds have been used appropriately.

The SCA procedure is again illustrative: The local person

responsible for handling the initial grant returns to Peshawar some time later, with the receipts. Committee staff carefully review the documents and then quiz the responsible person to see if he corroborates what the documents say. The receipts are so complicated that it would be difficult to fabricate them convincingly and it would be even harder to remember the fabrications. The investigators then go to the camps and ask about the distribution of the funds. If the documentation is poor but the investigation suggests that the money was correctly used, the Committee makes another grant of Rs. 50,000 and explains the procedures again. They tell the commander that if his organization does not provide adequate documentation this time, they will not be able to help in the future. If the documentation and the checks made by investigators are good, then a much larger grant is made, depending on the needs of the area.

Whenever foodstuffs or clothing are purchased in Pakistan, receipts are obtained from the merchants. Photographs are also often taken of goods in transit, upon arrival, and during distribution. The Swedish Committee gives a camera and film to local authorities to record food aid distribution. Receipts are also obtained from the commander, the heads of villages and the actual recipients. The PVOs believe that it is very difficult to falsify receipts which ask for numbers of women, children and men in a family and require a thumb print or signature. It can be relatively easy to spot falsified documents because either the finger prints are all too similar or the numbers of different kinds of family members do not form a reasonable statistical picture. There are security concerns in asking for this kind of documentation, particularly in an area of military activity. If receipts were captured, it could be devastating for the villages compromised.

In some instances, foreign monitors have actually seen the cash distributed to families or a village elder. Afghanaid, for example, uses foreign monitors to oversee distribution whenever possible. Whether these monitors do so or not depends on the size of the operation, timing and experience with a commander. Sometimes it is not physically possible to oversee an operation because the distribution of assistance takes place over too great an area. Sometimes, particularly if the PVOs receive funds later than expected, they must hurry to get assistance in before the passes close for the winter - in such cases, monitoring can only be done the following spring.

It is important for USAID to realize that its reporting and accountability requirements limit the ability of the PVOs to respond in certain kinds of situations and to many of the more distant and inaccessible areas. If, in the PVO estimation, there is no structure in an area that could, with some certainty, responsibly handle funds, then funding from

certain donors cannot be risked. In addition, the logistics of transmitting money safely can also appear overwhelmingly difficult and can rule out an area. The Swedish Committee, by contrast, is prepared to write off a certain percentage of the funds it sends. It obviously hopes that its losses are small but its expectation of a 75% success rate gives the Swedes a flexibility that other PVOs do not have. The Swedish Government, a major funder of SCA, balances the need for help against the possibility of a certain amount of the assistance being misappropriated or lost and is prepared to accept losses of up to 40% in the case of Afghanistan. This allows the Swedish Committee to take greater risks and to respond to situations that other PVOs could not normally consider. Even then, there are areas the SCA would like to help but cannot. Ghor Province is an example of one region that very desperately needs assistance but the SCA has not been able to find a reliable commander who could serve as a conduit.

The PVOs understand USAID's need to explain its expenditures and are not arguing for a change in its policy. But that policy does mean that food aid programs funded by USAID may be most appropriate in more settled and secure areas and often the less distant ones.

7. Impact

Judging the impact of any assistance program is difficult enough in open societies. It is almost impossible to conduct any valid assessment of impact given wartime conditions in Afghanistan. The PVOs believe that CFF has helped people stay in their homes and that it has helped prevent a progressive deterioration in their living conditions, a deterioration which is not surprising after eight years of a war whose target has often been the civilian population.

8. CFF vs. the Shipment of Commodities

One alternative that has been tried is sending foodstuffs as opposed to cash. In the PVO view, sending cash for distribution to needy families has several advantages over the transhipment of food staples:

- it is easily transported and hidden, whereas a convoy puts food items and personnel at greater risk;
- there may be no adequate storage for large quantities of food items in some areas;
- food shipments often require more transport

animals than are available in an area and such animals are often critically needed for the transport of war materiel;

- it is difficult to transport food items into some deficit areas due to the poor network of roads and winter snows (most areas north of the Hindu Kush cannot be served with commodities in any appreciable quantity):

- it may be quicker than sending in commodities - starvation could occur very quickly in marginal agricultural areas where people have no cash and no food and have had to sell all their assets;

- it permits families to buy foods they prefer, need and can store;

- it supports local agriculture;

- it keeps open channels for redistributing food from surplus to deficit areas inside Afghanistan; and

- it is far less expensive than sending food. Transportation costs can be five or six times as expensive as the food sent, greatly reducing the assistance available.

In addition, it is no more certain that food shipments will reach their intended beneficiaries than that CFF funds will. Some of the above issues also apply to the transhipment of agricultural and rural development inputs, such as fertilizer and seed, but some of these must be supplied from Pakistan since they cannot be purchased in Afghanistan.

6. Changes in the CFF Program

The PVOs are now trying to encourage commanders to use CFF funds in more productive ways. For example, Afrane has established a policy of using part of every CFF grant to pay for labor on the repair and maintenance of local public works. The Swedish and Norwegian Committees have also begun promoting this in the past year, encouraging the commanders to help needy families set up small income generating projects or paying for their labor on various projects. It should, however, be pointed out that accounting for funds spent in these ways will tax the capabilities of a local administration far more than the simple distribution of cash to families.

There is another important role for CFF. It is often a useful first step or an opening wedge in beginning to get assistance flowing to an area. It serves as a mechanism for

building credibility in a new area in which a PVO is contemplating development activities and as a useful test of local administrative capabilities. The logistics involved in distributing the funds to needy families and accounting for that distribution can also be used to strengthen the local administration and build credibility for it. It can also help returning refugees re-establish themselves.

B. Village Assistance Program

1. Types of Activities

The PVOs included in this report are at different stages in the development of agricultural programs. Some, such as ARC and BIA, have been running such programs for the last few years; while others, such as Afghanaid and the Swedish Committee, are laying the groundwork for such programs now.

Village assistance projects concentrate on small scale activities of the following kind:

- repair and cleaning of irrigation systems (with priority given to systems with widely shared community ownership);

- provision of agricultural equipment (threshers, pumps, generators, tools, tractors);

- provision of farm animals (sheep, oxen, poultry);

- provision of seed, fertilizer, and pesticides; and

- small, income-generating projects, such as carpet weaving, poultry and sewing.

Agriculture projects are underway or in the planning stages in approximately thirteen provinces. Examples of activities are as follows:

- Swedish Committee - repair of irrigation systems in one province

- Afrane - carpet weaving for martyr's widows in one province;

- ARC - seed and fertilizer in two provinces;

- BIA - grain seed, market gardens, improved agricultural techniques and livestock protection in one province; and

- Norwegian Committee - pumps and generators in one

province

- Afghanaid - two tractors, seed and fertilizer in one northern district

The stress is more on reconstruction and the provision of agricultural inputs rather than development. Few, if any, new skills and technologies are being introduced to rural areas, although Afrane, for example, has trained local villagers in pump maintenance and repair. The ARC has Afghan agriculturalists whose role it is to give advice on maximizing yields. BIA has French experts whose role is similar on their agriculture project. Other PVOs have introduced threshers to areas where wheat threshers were previously unknown. Most of the interventions to date, however, have been relatively straightforward and simple. The needs are clear and the situation does not permit complicated interventions requiring sophisticated manpower.

Afghanaid has established a policy of providing a package of office equipment and supplies to local staff involved in such projects. Three areas last year received items such as calculators, files, staples, stationary and the like. Afghanaid staff also give advice to local representatives on accounting and reporting procedures.

The resources to manage such projects differ. The Swedish Committee would like to establish ten small agriculture projects, while the ARC feels that it can comfortably manage two. All the PVOs are interested in collaborating and there at are a number of instances of agricultural activities of one PVO receiving funding from another.

2. Setting up Village Assistance Projects

The criteria for selecting village assistance sites are much stricter than those for "Cash for Food" owing to the fact that interventions are more complicated and require greater control over implementation and closer monitoring. Also required are stronger local administrative capabilities than CFF demands and good community cooperation. Priority for such activities is given to areas that are reasonably secure and in which an adequate population base is left to resume farming. Prime candidates for this kind of assistance are areas which have had experience in handling CFF and where PVO staff have established relationships of trust with the commander and local leaders. Given limited manpower and resources, it also makes some sense for PVOs to concentrate their efforts in the areas they know best.

There is no blueprint for selecting an area in which to work. The civilian and military structures vary too greatly from one (sometimes very small) area to another. Commanders may

be the entree into an area but they may or may not have any control over or interest in civilian activities. In general, the PVOs would prefer to work with and encourage the growth of civilian structures, which may last and give an area some stability in the event of settlement. In the Panjshir, the PVOs can work with a civilian agricultural committee made up of trained professionals. This committee was set up partly at the behest of Afghanaid. In Kunar, BIA works directly with civilian representatives selected by villagers - no political party is involved. Similarly, the SCA works with village elders in Wardak, and no party is involved. In some areas the PVOs work with a committee and the local commander is a member of that committee. The PVOs must approach communities requesting help on a one-by-one basis and evaluate very carefully whether a particular community has the potential to organize project implementation.

As a general rule, the more remote the province, the harder it is to organize and monitor assistance, the greater the transportation costs, and the longer the reporting time.

The PVOs conduct surveys or needs assessments in order to choose an appropriate area and to determine the assistance which would be most useful. Such surveys are sometimes conducted by Afghan field staff in conjunction with villages committees and sometimes by expatriates. The Swedish Committee, for example, sent an Afghan agriculturalist and an economist to an area to determine the amount of work that needed to be done to clean and repair karezes. In another province, a village committee is working with Afghanaid to develop a proposal for village assistance monies.

BIA began its project in Kunar by meeting first with civilian elders from the project area. Staff then met with a jirga set up by the elders to discuss needs and how a project would proceed. They then conducted a survey and talked with villagers. There were at least three more jirgas since there are three ethnic groups and different political parties in the project area. Each group or clan chose a representative/spokesman to liaise with project staff and introduce selected seed, etc. into his area. If project staff decided that a representative was incompetent, after working with him, they requested his people to nominate someone else. Initial project efforts attracted the attention of a group of well educated Nuristanis in a neighboring area and these individuals came to project staff asking for help. It turned out that they had links with powerful party officials in Peshawar and the latter were able to expedite project activities in general.

The SCA first discussed its karez cleaning/repairing project in Wardak with one individual from the area. He then brought out five farmers from the area for discussions. SCA staff found they could not get any reliable information from the

farmers who contradicted each other at every point. Staff did know from asking around Peshawar that the karezes required work. They found an agriculturalist and a teacher from the area, hired them and sent them to investigate the situation. The teacher and the agriculturalist, after preparing a report recommending the project, came to Peshawar with two local elders, who had been chosen by a jirga for the purpose of representing the community to SCA. SCA negotiated an agreement with these elders, and their two employees returned to supervise implementation. At an appropriate point in the work, the SCA will send Afghans from another region to monitor implementation.

3. Administrative and Technical Needs

CFF grants are much easier to administer than village assistance projects. They require no technical support and need fewer administrative staff. Most of the PVOs agree that they must ask donors for a minimum of ten percent on grants if they are to be held accountable for village assistance activities. Some have been getting much less than this, making it difficult to hire adequate technical, accounting and secretarial staff. Afghanaid, for example, has been making do with a part-time volunteer secretary. Depending on the types of projects initiated, the PVOs will require staff or consultants with technical skills - agriculturalists, animal technicians, engineers and others may be required at least intermittently.

In addition to increasing the overhead on some of its grants, there are a few other ways in which USAID could help the PVOs. One possibility would be to increase the amount of time a USAID auditor/accountant is available to help the PVOs with accounting issues. Another is to increase the amount of time that the AID Rep's office in Peshawar can help the PVOs with coordination and programming matters. A third possibility could be to give VITA the resources to help the PVOs with technical and program support.

4. Helping Returning Refugees

One interesting possibility which is beginning to be discussed by PVOs is the initiation of projects to help refugees return home. This may, in fact, be one result of existing projects. There is some evidence to suggest that some refugees have returned to Province X since the ARC began project activities. The Swedish Committee, in cooperation with the Norwegian Committee, is helping 200 returned refugees in another province by paying wages for re-terracing fields and providing farm animals, especially oxen. Since there is a shortage of animals in Afghanistan, they are requiring that one-third of the animals be purchased in

Pakistan. The Swedes will examine the possibility of establishing similar projects over the coming year. Afghanaid is currently exploring assistance to refugees who would like to return to one of the southern provinces. A survey is currently being conducted in the province and in the camps and passes. Staff currently expect that returnees will need assistance with housing reconstruction, draught animals and interim "Cash for Food". This is the kind of instance in which CFF could be very useful. Returned refugees would obviously need a means of support while they rebuild houses and plant a first crop.

5. Field Staff

The PVOs are all beginning to develop Afghan field staff for project implementation and monitoring. Because of the difficulties in hiring skilled staff, responsibilities will have to be carefully tailored to their level of ability. Afghan professionals exist in very limited numbers and there is competition between those providing cross-border assistance for the same, restricted pool of people. This will have some effect on the number and kind of projects that can be undertaken and on kind of monitoring that can be expected. While Afghan staff will receive training, for the most part it can be assumed that their level of sophistication will never be very great. Monitoring activities will often consist of confirming that what was supposed to have happened actually happened. This need to confirm routine actions will consume much of the time that in a normal project might be devoted to analyzing issues of project effectiveness and impact. The PVOs will try to send Afghans from outside an area to monitor activities in that area.

C. GOP and Alliance Attitudes toward the PVOs

The GOP has not voiced reservations about PVO activities directly to the PVOs so it is difficult for them to respond if this is an issue. To date, the GOP has offered the PVOs every facility needed for their work (visas, a blind eye turned to expatriate teams entering the tribal territories and crossing the border). The GOP has not, for political reasons of its own, wanted to appear to sanction PVO activities by holding formal discussions with them. This may ultimately change. During the course of preparing this paper, the PVOs have indicated an interest in initiating regular discussions with the GOP. Soundings are now being taken in the hope of improving such contacts.

The PVOs, as noted, work in varying degrees with Alliance parties to channel assistance responsibly and correctly. To the extent that the parties see themselves in direct

competition with the PVOs for resources currently granted by USAID to the PVOs, they might well have reason to object to PVO programs. Granting funds directly to the Alliance, however, raises accountability problems to a new level. A further issue could be the insistence by parties in the Alliance on a relatively equal division of funds, regardless of need and ability to use.

III. ADVANTAGES TO USAID FROM SUPPORTING THE PVOs

A. Given the uncertainties with respect to Afghanistan's political future -- the weaknesses in the Alliance, the differing ideologies and the lack of unity -- it would seem to be in the US Government's interest to support those PVOs which have developed ties to some of the more effective commanders in the country and the Afghan political parties. These ties allow the PVOs to use the local organizations built up by various commanders to deliver development goods and services in a relatively efficient and equitable manner. Most of the commanders are at least loosely attached to one of the Alliance parties, so support to them does not undermine the Alliance. While their attachment may not survive a postwar settlement, some of the commanders will inevitably emerge as powerful individuals controlling certain areas and/or playing a vital role in a new government. In such instances, PVO links would give USAID important channels through which to work with a particular commander, and the credibility to do so.

B. While the sums granted by the USAID to the PVOs are considerable, they are unlikely in themselves to make a substantial difference in the Alliance's capabilities. Since there is no clearly accepted government-in-exile, it is important for USAID to diversify its channels for delivering assistance in the event of the loss, collapse, incompetence or venality of any one of them. Usually a strong argument can be made in favor of not fragmenting one's energies and resources. However, when a situation is as fragile and uncertain as that of Afghanistan, it makes greater sense to follow traditional advice and not put all of one's eggs in the same basket. The PVOs understand that the U.S. Government's policy is to try to strengthen the Alliance. However, there is also a case to be made for the establishment of competitive systems for the delivery of assistance.

C. The PVOs have established delivery systems that can provide some of the needed assistance. They have built up networks of reliable contacts and have learned how to operate in this difficult environment over the last several years. Any new agency entering the field will need a relatively long learning period and in the short run, will not be able to provide the same level of assistance that the

existing PVOs can. Additional funding and staff, along with larger operations, for the three direct USAID contractors (VITA, MSH and UNO) would further increase their visibility level, which may not be in the interest of either these organizations or the US Government. In any case, they could not immediately duplicate PVO delivery systems.

D. The PVOs can provide greater accountability for USAID funds than other channels currently available, with the exception of the three large USAID contractors working in agriculture, health and education.

E. The PVOs represent several European countries. For political and diplomatic reasons, it is imperative for the US Government and the mujahideen to have visible evidence of European support and concern for the Afghan resistance. These PVOs help keep their home countries involved and informed about Soviet activities in Afghanistan and form lobbying groups on Afghan issues. They put pressure on their governments, which many groups feel are far too neutral, given the circumstances. Without USAID support, some of these PVOs would have to close. Others would have their activities and effectiveness at home substantially reduced. The loss of European groups supporting the resistance can help make the conflict look that much more like a superpower conflict as opposed to a conflict in which broad international support is lined up against Soviet policy. Much, if not all, of the non-USAID funding the PVOs have been receiving would probably then be lost to Afghanistan. The PVOs are interested in trying to broaden the base of their support but they need time to do so. An abrupt termination in AID funding would be devastating. In addition, Afghanistan is an old issue in the news. It is always easier to solicit donations for the newest disaster, famine or war.

F. At such a time as a settlement is achieved, there will be renewed public interest in helping Afghanistan. The PVOs will be well placed to tap this new interest in their home countries for donations for rehabilitation efforts. They will be equally well placed to expand development activities inside Afghanistan on a regional basis and will be able to do so much more effectively and efficiently than new organizations entering the scene.

G. There are a few good commanders and parties that are not attached to the Alliance. These and the populations that they control are generally excluded from Western assistance packages. Parts of the Hazarjat are an example of this. The Shi'a are substantially excluded from participation in the Alliance of seven political parties. The PVOs can help to build a bridge here. One PVO, for example, expects to develop a program in collaboration with Harakat Islami (a Shi'a/Hazarjat party) over the coming months. In addition, the French PVOs have an access to French-speaking

commanders that English-speaking groups might not have. It is in the US Government's interest to build contacts with and gain knowledge of such organizations and the individuals involved in them. PVOs are virtually the only avenue for doing this.

H. Enhanced cooperation between the PVOs should improve PVO operations and offers some of the advantages to USAID of channelling resources through only one organization. The PVOs can gain increased technical depth and stretch their resources through collaboration. USAID then gets more value for its money. A few joint operations have been mounted to date, while more are under exploration. The Cooperative Committee is beginning to explore the possibility of joint technical training for Afghan field workers and has begun to discuss programming issues.

I. PVO programs are relatively low cost operations that permit USAID to channel more funds to direct program assistance as opposed to overhead costs. Few other options would maximize resources to this extent, while channelling funds directly to the GOP or the Alliance would greatly increase the amount of AID staff time spent on monitoring.

J. While there is certainly a negative aspect side to sending expatriate teams inside, there are also advantages in terms of improved monitoring and increased information about the situation in various parts of the country. It also has a positive psychological impact on Afghans in indicating Western support for the resistance and concern for their situation. That concern is very clearly shown by the fact that Westerners are prepared to risk their lives to bring help. USAID cannot, by contrast, risk US personnel inside.

IV. THE PVOs

AFGHANAID

Afghanaid was founded in 1981 and for the first few years concentrated on research but also gave funding to the programs of other organizations working in Afghanistan. In 1985 it started up its own program of humanitarian assistance, sending cash for the purchase of food into northeastern Afghanistan, which was suffering badly from repeated Soviet and regime attacks. Afghanaid is funded largely by USAID and the British Government's ODA, but also has some private funds. USAID has supplied 65-70% of the annual budget in recent years.

Fundraising activities have increased in the past year. Approaches have been made to the EEC, and these are expected to meet with some success. London staff are also working to put together an international consortium of philanthropic groups which can quickly provide emergency assistance for areas following military offensives. A volunteer with expertise in the development of exhibition materials will join the Peshawar staff in February and will be responsible for developing fundraising materials. The agency hopes to raise about L 750,000 (approximately $ 1.3 million) from non-USAID sources in 1988-9.

"Cash for Food" and Emergency Assistance

Afghanaid's primary activity inside Afghanistan to date has been the provision of funds to the Panjshir for food. Funding for this program came first from the U.S. State Department (which wanted its funds to continue to go to the Panjshir), then USAID and the ODA. The area has been hard hit. People have abandoned farms and sought security in caves in the mountains. Initial reports in 1985, when CFF began, indicated that some families had been reduced to living on wild plants. They may still be at certain times of the year. Their problems were compounded in 1986 by the poor rainfall. The region has a large number of displaced persons and a very good civilian administration, which has been able to handle and account for donated funds. Afghanaid has continued to support the Panjshir, believing that it was better to concentrate its resources in order to have a substantial impact on one population. By continuing support, Afghanaid has made it possible for some families to stay in the area and has reduced the debt burden of all those assisted.

Four tranches of CFF have been delivered to the Panjshir, the most recent in the summer of 1987. The first two tranches allowed an average family, in a target group of

village assistance program, which aims at promoting reconstruction and providing support to agriculture. It continues to believe, however, that there is a need and a role for CFF within the context of a broader rehabilitation program.

Village Assistance Program

With funding from the ODA, Afghanaid was able in 1987 to experiment with pilot reconstruction activities. It is interested, over the longer term, in developing activities that improve agriculture and that help strengthen a civilian administrative apparatus. With funding from the ODA, Afghanaid was able to experiment with pilot activities. The two general areas being most closely investigated for village assistance projects are those on the border, which are more secure and are more easily monitored, and the Panjshir with its surrounding agricultural belt.

In 1987 approximately L 180,000 (approximately $317,000) was expended on the development of seven small village assistance programs: Kunduz, Takhar, Kunar, Panjshir, Logar, and Mazar-i-Sharif. Other areas are at more preliminary stages of investigation, including some of those to which trial CFF grants were made this past year. It hopes to have L300,000 ($515,000) at its disposal next year for this work. From its trial CFF grants and other pilot activities, Afghanaid will select those areas with the greatest need and the best absorptive capacity.

Whenever possible, Afghanaid will work with village committees and shuras. With its assistance package, Afghanaid will continue its current policy of providing all the supplies necessary to staff an office in the impact area to administer the assistance. Afghanaid is testing the use on a permanent basis of trained Afghans as field monitors. There are seven teams of Afghan monitors working inside the country, with a field coordinator based in Peshawar. For the most part, the monitors have received only a few days of training. Afghanaid is currently assessing this program and will give the more capable monitors three months of additional training early this year. Training will be given in accounting, reporting, needs assessment, photography and relevant technical skills. Current field monitors have been appointed by the local commander or his representatives, or by Afghanaid. Sometimes they are from the area in which they are working and sometimes from the outside. There are disadvantages to each arrangement and risks inherent in employing such personnel. Therefore, Afghanaid expects to continue to use expatriates from time to time, to monitor and support the Afghan field workers and carry out other suitable tasks. Below is a summary of efforts to date:

• Kunar - In addition to receiving CFF this summer, funds were contributed for fertilizer and three teams of oxen. Expatriate monitors travelling to Kunar this autumn were instructed to do the following: pick up receipts for the funds; evaluate the effectiveness of the assistance; conduct a needs assessment for agriculture and housing; and evaluate the usefulness of giving further training to the two field workers provided by the local administration. The monitors were able to get receipts for only some of the fertilizer -it is not clear that the rest was purchased. There was convincing evidence that the oxen had been purchased but no receipts were forthcoming. Renewed fighting may have been responsible for the problems with this assistance.

• Panjshir and the agricultural belt that surrounds it- Agriculture in the Panjshir itself has always been somewhat marginal due to the nature of the terrain. Its valleys are fertile but have been decimated by the war. People have had to move up the mountainsides to safer but less fertile land. Areas surrounding the Panjshir are very fertile and have good agricultural potential. These are areas that can help feed the Panjshir. Since these areas have come under Massoud's influence, Afghanaid personnel believe that an effective aid package can be implemented, and that the donors' accounting requirements can be met.

-In Talogan, a large landowner who is currently only farming 20% of his total land holdings has been granted Rs. 300,000 (approximately $18,000) for 2 tractors, seed and fertilizer. This has traditionally been a mechanized farming area. The objective is to increase agricultural production in the area by bringing more land under cultivation. In addition, this individual has been supporting a large number of internal refugees he has allowed to live on his land and will be better able to provide them with work and food. Afghanaid will also train two monitors nominated by the landlord, as a first step in assessing further assistance for this area.

-In Mazar-i-Sharif the local refugee administration is examining three options: (1) providing draft animals for displaced sharecroppers to rent to their landlords; (2) providing two carpet-weaving villages with money to buy good wool in order to make better grade carpets; and (3) providing fertilizer to the 300 farmers in the area. A final decision will be made by the mujahideen Finance Committee. This is considered a pilot activity. Further assistance will be considered based on the success of this effort.

-In Khanabad Rs. 100,000 (approximately $6000) have been provided to a committee of village leaders to investigate irrigation and cultivation problems. One serious problem in the area is that the government controls the main irrigation canal. The committee is preparing proposals for Afghanaid consideration.

- Nangarhar - Afghanaid also sees a need for assistance to help the trickle of refugees returning to Nangarhar. Staff are currently conducting a needs assessment in the province and in the camps and passes to find out where people are moving, why they are moving and what it costs to move. A report is expected to be available in early 1988. It is expected that there will be a need for housing reconstruction, draft animals and an interim "Cash for Food" program - these three items may help poorer people return to Nangarhar. Afghanaid is currently developing a three year proposal, for which it will seek funding from a British agency.

Staffing

The staff size is very small: a director in London, a field director and projects director in Peshawar, a couple of volunteers, and several Afghan staff. Afghanaid has recently revised its accounting system and hired a new accountant in response to concerns voiced by USAID.

Other Activities

Afghanaid also manages a tailoring project for handicapped refugees and has established an ambulance system to ferry war wounded for medical treatment in Pakistan.

AFRANE

In the wake of the 1978 Soviet invasion, a group with strong ties to Afghanistan founded Afrane. The first mission providing humanitarian assistance inside Afghanistan took place in the spring of 1980. The society's membership has grown to about 2000. The group's headquarters are in Paris but it has twenty-four branches in other French cities. It publishes a journal (Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan which is often quoted by other magazines) six times a year, writes articles for the press, makes films and schedules lectures. It is an important source of information for the French public about events in Afghanistan.

Afrane has three objectives:

1) to provide humanitarian assistance inside Afghanistan;

2) to keep Afghanistan in the public eye; and

3) to put pressure on foreign governments and international organizations to be responsive to the plight of the Afghan people.

About half its revenues come from USAID, while the remainder are from various French sources. It solicits funds from the general public and has a small grant from the French government. The balance between CFF monies and development assistance has changed - approximately 60 % of Afrane's budget for work inside Afghanistan is now devoted to development assistance.

"Cash for Food" and Emergency Assistance

The bulk of Afrane's humanitarian aid to date has been provided in the form of CFF and other emergency funds. Such assistance has been provided to several provinces, including Logar, Herat, Baghlan, Badakhshan, Kandahar, Ghazni and Zabul. The society uses expatriate French teams to carry in the assistance needed, to work with local authorities and to monitor grants. Eight to ten missions inside Afghanistan are made each year. In 1987 there were eight.

The group works closely with the Alliance in Peshawar and with the local commanders in whose areas assistance is being provided. Afrane has worked with all the parties except that of Sayaf, who has not to date been interested in their assistance. Recently, there were indications that a Hizb-i-Islami member or members were involved in the dissapearance of an Afrane envoy north of Kunduz. Party explanations have not been satisfactory. Until this is cleared up, Afrane will not be able to work with this party. Afrane is also discussing the possibility of providing assistance to a Shi'a party, Harakat Islami, in the province of Kabul. Afghanistan's Shi'a have generally been overlooked by Western organizations in the provision of humanitarian assistance and they are underrepresented in the Alliance.

French teams taking in cash oversee the distribution of money to needy families. It is, however, the local civilian (such as they are) and resistance authorities who determine the list of the most needy. Afrane receives that list with the names of the recipients, the number of people in the family, the village, the sum received and a mark or signature of the recipient. Generally, Afrane teams see the money distributed

to village leaders such as mullahs and maliks, who then make the final disbursements, which are checked by another Afrane team. Afrane believes that its contacts and relationships put it in a position to discover abuses. Assistance was ended to one area after it was discovered that the Commander, whose staff had distributed the funds to needy people in front of a French team, later took the money back. Contacts from the area passed this information on to Afrane, and a French team was then sent to check. Recipients were interviewed and the initial information confirmed. Afrane has lodged an official complaint with the party leader controlling this area.

Because Afrane works with the Alliance, Afrane teams generally rely on Afghan translators/colleagues who are acceptable to the parties. Sometimes the translator is nominated by a party and if he is not found to be satisfactory, Afghan staff register a complaint with the party. Sometimes the translator is found via other contacts. Afrane recognizes that this is not a wholly satisfactory arrangement but does not have the resources to develop its own permanent staff of translator/guides.

Agricultural Assistance

Afrane prefers to use its resources to help regenerate the productive base of an area and so does not believe that CFF is necessarily the most appropriate form of assistance. A portion of all its CFF grants is usually spent on paying people for their labor on necessary public works, such as the cleaning and repair of canals. Priority is given to paying internal refugees for labor, since they have few sources of sustenance.

Afrane has moved increasingly to undertake rehabilitation activities since its first venture in 1982. These activities have included cleaning and repairing karezes and canals; providing tractors, threshers and water pumps; providing drills for constructing underground grain storage; providing seed; and providing livestock. The threshers and tractors have enabled villagers to thresh their wheat very quickly, thereby lowering the risk that Soviet helicopters will fire the crop just before or during threshing. Some areas are also so short of labor that mechanized equipment is necessary. A summary of key activities follows:

- Baghlan - sheep, goats and poultry breeding in one valley

- Kandahar - Karez cleaning and repair, a tractor and thresher provided to a few villages

- Badakhshan - repair of canals, cattle breeding

in four valleys

- Herat - repair of canals, provision of agricultural equipment

- Ghazni - tractor/thresher/water pump

In one area of Ghazni where Afrane has a project, the people were leaving two years ago because they had no food. Now they have a surplus which they give freely to the mujahideen who cross their area. Also in Ghazni, Afrane has jointly implemented one project providing tractors, water pumps and other equipment in conjunction with the Norwegian Committee. There were some problems with the water pumps (Chinese and Pakistani made) Afrane had provided to Ghazni. To remedy this, they sent spare parts and a man who taught local people how to repair the pumps. When a French team returned some time later to evaluate the project, it found that all the pumps were in good working order. Afrane provides important spare parts with any water pump sent in, so that repairs can be effectuate immediately. There have been no problems reported with the tractors, which are made by Massey-Ferguson, and which Afghans generally know how to fix. Afrane has discussed and is continuing to discuss collaborative efforts with other PVOs working in Afghanistan.

Afrane believes that its delivery and monitoring system is as satisfactory as the situation and its own resources permit. After so many years of operation, it has good contacts with the parties, commanders and with other Afghans. It is well placed to collect information regarding development initiatives and to monitor them. Afrane will continue to use expatriate French teams to carry out a variety of tasks inside Afghanistan. Such teams usually consist of two individuals, someone who has made previous trips inside Afghanistan, and someone making his first trip. Several of the group's volunteers have made repeated trips inside the country and speak Farsi. This year, from 66 applicants, Afrane selected 6 or 7 new individuals who will make trips on behalf of Afrane. Also this year, for the first time, Afrane formalized its training program for such individuals. They now receive about two weeks of training and are required to pass an "examination" at the end of the training. While Afrane realizes that this is very short, its projects are also straightforward and simple. Afrane is not trying to introduce new technologies but to begin reconstruction efforts. Some of Afrane's team members in the past have been engineers and hydrologists, and these specialists have been very helpful in advising on the reconstruction of irrigation systems.

Afrane sends a team to an existing project area once a year for monitoring purposes. Projects that are not working are cancelled, if the difficulty cannot be resolved. In one

province, for example, there was no indication that the equipment sent in had been used primarily for the benefit of needy people. In addition, the equipment was neglected. Accordingly, assistance to this area was ended.

Staffing

With the exception of a secretary in Paris and a newly appointed representative for Peshawar, all those who work for the organization do so on a voluntary basis. Afrane has relied on the services of an economist and others who come to Pakistan a few times a year to develop Afrane's humanitarian assistance packages.

Other Activities

Afrane has been supporting schools in Logar and elsewhere and would like to expand this program It has also provided drills to one area to dig caves for shelter and storage in the mountains.

AUSTRIAN RELIEF COMMITTEE

The ARC is primarily involved in working with refugees but began an agriculture assistance program inside Afghanistan in 1985. The Committee also started a small food aid program in 1985 but stopped that same year, believing that "Cash for Food" was not the best way to deploy limited resources. Their funding comes from a number of private groups in Norway, Holland, Austria and elsewhere. About 50% of their budget is derived from UNHCR. The Committee has no government funding. It spends about 25% of its budget on agricultural development activities, but that percentage is likely to fall slightly this year. The Committee expects to continue its existing projects and is not seeking new ones. Staff believe that the organization has reached the outer limits of what it can properly manage. The ARC is interested, however, in helping other organizations start up new projects since it has considerable experience in getting activities in Afghanistan underway.

Agricultural Assistance

The objectives of its agriculture projects are to enable farm families to stay on the land, increase agricultural production and help farmers become self-sufficient.

The ARC tried working through local commanders but was not

altogether pleased with the results and so now encourages the establishment of agricultural committees or shuras in the areas where it is working. The commander is always a member of the shura, but the existence of other village leaders on the committee means that it is in a position to put some pressure on the commander. In one area in Kandahar, where the commander had sold the teams of oxen given by ARC and bought himself a tractor and spare parts with the proceeds, the shura, once constituted, was able to persuade him to let it allocate tractor time to village farmers. In each shura, one man is appointed as the liaison for the project.

The ARC does not make a practice of sending expatriates inside Afghanistan. It has had the good fortune to find relatively well qualified Afghans who work as field-level agriculturalists. Fifty percent have had some university education and all have at least five years of practical experience in agriculture. It has been harder to find qualified field supervisors and a project manager. The ARC is still searching for such staff. The field officers work with the shuras to implement the activities. They give advice as well as delivering inputs.

Sometimes agricultural inputs are purchased in Pakistan and taken inside by ARC staff. Sometimes they are purchased locally. In the latter case, field office staff pay a dealer when the goods are delivered to the shura. Field staff obtain receipts from the commander, the shura and from individual farmers.

Agricultural activities are being supported in three areas: Kunar, Kandahar and Logar:.

Kunar - This is a seed project that is being managed by the Bureau International Afghanistan. ARC provides one-sixth of the funding and has provided two temporary agriculturalists who are supervised by BIA staff.

Kandahar - Activities began here in 1985 to help the victims of heavy bombardments have the means to stay. They expanded to new districts in 1986 and again in 1987. The project provides wheat seed (winter crop) and maize seed (summer crop) along with fertilizer to farmers for one year. Staff advise farmers to multiply their seed for the following year's planting. Some oxen have also been distributed. It also supplies pesticides and sprayers, together with some water pumps, to fruit-growers. Tools, such as horticulture scissors, scythes and wheelbarrows are also supplied. Criteria for choosing project areas are as follows:

- dense population of poor farmers;
- area controlled by mujahideen;
- fertile land with water available;
- good contacts with local commanders

Once the seeds for both crops have been distributed, the project moves to new areas but continues to supervise sowing and harvest in the old areas. Four agriculturalists manage this work. Through August 1987, 3396 farm families have benefitted from these inputs. ARC staff believe that agricultural production has increased in the assisted areas, but since farmers do not traditionally weigh their crop, it is impossible to determine by how much. There also appears to have been some migration back to these areas.

The fifth phase is now in effect. A total of 435 families in three villages are being assisted.

Logar - Activities began in December 1986, with a survey to select areas most needing assistance and most willing to cooperate. Six such areas were chosen. Maize seed and fertilizer were then distributed to 512 families. Those families later received wheat seed and fertilizer for the winter crop. Three bridges were also repaired. Sulphur, pesticides and spray pumps were given to farmers with vineyards. Now the project has moved to a new area and the process of providing wheat and maize seed, along with pesticides, sprayers, horticulture scissors and water pumps for orchard areas has begun again. This spring the project will also construct six embankments to save vineyards from spring floods. ARC has two field officers and a field supervisor in Logar.

BUREAU INTERNATIONAL AFGHANISTAN

BIA was founded in 1980 and began activities inside Afghanistan four years later. Like Afrane, it publishes a journal and various brochures and schedules lectures and conferences. As examples, they held a conference on the economy of a country in a state of war in 1986, and sponsored the 1987 report of Marek Slivinski. It analyzes events in Afghanistan and disseminates information in an attempt to influence public opinion in Europe. This March it is planning a colloquium with important figures in the Afghan resistance, members of the European Parliament and other influential Europeans. In addition to information dissemination, it works in agriculture in Afghanistan. It does not have a CFF program, believing in part that missions to deliver such assistance are too dangerous. It also believes that its limited resources are better spent on development activities.

It is a small organization with a budget this year that will probably equal around FF 3 million (less than $500,000).

Forty percent of its funding comes from the EEC, while the rest comes from various private European organizations, such as Oxfam, Swiss Aid and the Swiss Committee for Afghanistan. A small grant comes from the French government.

Agricultural Activities

Kunar

BIA began activities in 1985 and now has two projects in two areas. They were initially introduced to one area by a French-speaking commander. One project is a cereals project which has distributed 20 kg each of wheat and maize seed to approximately 10,000 families. These families will then multiply the seed for the following year. Political parties in the area and local community representatives helped distribute the seed, which was meant to replace degenerate seed. This project has helped the resistance keep land under production. Each family received the same amount, which worked in favor of smaller farmers. There are a number of different ecological zones in the project area, and there have been some problems with growing the maize seed at higher altitudes. Trials will have to be conducted to find appropriate seed for multiplication in these zones. It is difficult to find seed adapted for high altitudes in Pakistan. It has also proved exceedingly difficult to buy and transport huge quantities of seed. This will be the last year of distribution, at least for the next few years, since farmers can now multiply their seed and share it with others.

The second project is a more general agricultural development project, which is now being extended to Nuristan. The population is largely Nuristani. This is an area that is protected by mountains and has not been much shaken by the war. The population is stable, and the traditional civilian authorities are still responsible for community activities. BIA is trying to introduce new crops, such as vegetables, and new techniques for crop protection and stock improvement. The local diet is very deficient in vegetables. It has, however, been difficult finding land for growing vegetables since priority is given to grains, but some farmers have cleaned up abandoned terraces and planted onions, tomatos, potatoes and other vegetables. BIA has also been trying to protect the maize crop from insects. It brought in spray pumps which it then rented to villagers - requests in 1987 outstripped supply. The project has also introduced the treatment of sheep, goats, and cattle for internal parasites.

BIA has two Afghan staff in place - an engineer and a manager, and these oversee project activities. In addition, French staff spend five or six months a year on site. BIA works with village councils and signs a contract for each activity. One council, for example, has taken responsibility for managing a test plot of white beans. Project staff have

available, but staff comment that these cannot be found in all regions.

GUILDE DU RAID

Guilde du Raid has been taking funds inside Afghanistan for humanitarian assistance since 1980. They have in this time built up considerable experience with various commanders and the parties. A large portion of their funding comes indirectly from USAID, from IRC. However, Guilde also does considerable fundraising in France and receives some funds from the French government and the other European committees providing cross-border assistance. At the moment, Guilde du Raid is conducting a special fundraising campaign for emergency assistance for Khost. Guilde is the only PVO included here that was not formed specifically for the purpose of helping Afghanistan. It hopes to continue collaborating with the IRC and various European Committees since it believes that such collaboration reflects widespread international support for the Afghan people.

"Cash for Food" and Emergency Assistance

The bulk of Guilde du Raid's assistance is CFF. In 1987, it provided around FF 15 Million (USD 2.5-3 million) in food aid. It provides assistance to roughly ten provinces a year, and selects areas according to relative need and degree of destruction. If it has supported one area one year, it may not choose to do so the next. It generally sends ten teams of expatriates inside each year, and these teams investigate new areas for possible assistance, in addition to carrying out other functions. After eight years, Guilde has the contacts necessary for vetting commanders and investigating situations in different areas.

For the past three years, Guilde Missions have tried to take funds into Herat, which suffered considerable destruction three years ago. Each attempt, until 1987, failed. The area had received little assistance and the need was great. Jamiyat had asked for help and Guilde du Raid staff met several times with staff of Commander Ismail Khan. Finally, a group got through with a substantial amount of assistance that was, for the first time, carried in USD traveller checks. A contract was drawn up in Peshawar specifying the exchange rate upon arrival. That rate was about as good a rate as has been received by any group since the start of the war. Guilde's representative met with a local jirga to discuss the assistance and what it was for. Areas were designated (Guilde has acquired a sense of which ones had suffered most from conversations with journalists and others

from Herat). Guilde is pleased with the results of working with Commander Ismail Khan and would like to provide CFF for those areas not assisted during this recent trip. Its representative stayed long enough that the first distributions were made and he was able to bring back receipts. Guilde staff point out that everyone in Herat seemed to know that the French had come with money and that this, combined with the Commander's desire to get further assistance from the West, was good protection that the funds would be appropriately used. Guilde would have liked greater flexibility in the use of the money. There were many activities that it would have been appropriate to assist but this could not be known beforehand because so little information comes out of Herat. However, the money had been strictly designated as food aid.

This was a difficult and risky trip, as were others made to carry in CFF in the past year. CFF grants were taken in 1987 to Faryab, Badakhshan, Bamiyan/Baghlan, Wardak, Kabul, Paktia, Kandahar, and Logar, while a survey for emergency assistance was recently done in Khost. Because of the dangers, Guilde staff are currently thinking about sending future CFF funds separate from their expatriate team. The teams would still oversee the arrangements for distribution of the funds, and would monitor the process.

In Bamiyan/Baghlan the team interviewed people from a number of villages and chose one village as the subject of a case study on the economic situation. Based on this study, the team recommended to the jirga deciding on distribution of the funds, that selected families receive cash to purchase food for one month. They felt that this was adequate for helping people stay in the area. The jirga had proposed distributing funds to purchase one year's worth of food to a smaller number of families. The jirga accepted the French team's advice. Over 21,000 individuals benefitted from these funds. In addition to this distribution, the commander asked them to use part of the funds to establish a food stock of wheat, rice and oil for distribution to the needy in winter, particularly in event of an emergency. There was considerable inflation in food prices in the area, because of heavy military activity. In Badakhshan, "Cash for Food" was provided in 1986 to one valley of 10,000 individuals who were on the verge of having to migrate from the area.

Guilde maintains close links with the parties in Peshawar but will no longer routinely receive commanders requesting aid. This is in part because the Alliance parties refer commanders that they cannot or do not want to assist. Guild cannot meet all the requests either and finds, like the other PVOs, that it is very difficult to say no and that it does not have the resources to spend so much time vetting commanders.

Agricultural Assistance

The team that went to Bamiyan/Baghlan also provided funds for agricultural inputs (seeds, tools, seven oxen and a tractor) to one area. The Soviets were sending in wheat to try to attract support and elders felt it was important to try to counter this effort by providing people with the means to farm. The team felt comfortable working with the commander in this area because they knew that his administration was doing a good job with a European-supported project for the resettlement of internal refugees.

Guilde has provided agricultural assistance to Wardak for the past four years. The project is managed by an Afghan engineer. Staff have found it necessary to move very slowly on this project. During the first year, they conducted a survey for design and planning purposes. During the second year, they introduced seed and sprayers with pesticides for orchards. During the third, four threshers were provided and a cereal bank started. They have also provided agricultural tools, such as rakes, along with the materials to make more such items. Now in the fourth year, they are expanding the project to include other areas. Guilde has also provided CFF but less and less has been given each year. Staff work with a five member shura, and have paid a salary to the members for the past year. Each year, two teams composed of an agriculturalist and a financial person, travel to the area to provide technical and financial assistance and monitor progress.

They have recently begun a similar, but smaller project in Kandahar.

Staffing

The agency has a program administrator in Peshawar and an office in Paris. It has no Afghan staff in Peshawar, believing that such individuals are almost always attached to parties and that this can present problems for confidentiality. Guilde expects to continue to use expatriate teams as necessary and, like other PVOs, tends to use the same expatriates over and over. Its selection process is very careful. Each person who travels inside as a Guilde representative must spend one year collecting money for Afghanistan as a way of proving his seriousness and learning about the country. Guilde's current administrator in Peshawar, for example, collected FF 200,000 (about $20,000) by presenting talks and slide shows on Afghanistan in his free time. Serious applicants then spend a few days in training with veterans of such missions.

THE NORWEGIAN COMMITTEE

The Norwegian Committee is concerned primarily with cross-border assistance in the areas of agriculture, health and "Cash for Food". It had a budget in 1987 of $1.2 million, 60-70% of which was a grant from the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. The balance came from public fundraising in Norway. The Committee sees itself as a pressure group in Norway and tries to keep the public informed about Afghan issues. In addition to a headquarters in Oslo, it has around 40 branch committees in smaller towns and cities. The Committee just published a study booklet on Afghanistan so that members can better inform themselves.

"Cash for Food" and Emergency Assistance

The Committee has provided food aid to about twenty different provinces. The 1987 budget for food aid was Rs. 8 million. The Committee provided support to fifty commanders last year; ten of those received more than one tranche of funds. There is a backlog of 268 requests from commanders. Staff hope to have more funds available for food aid in 1988. The objective in providing food aid is to give people the means to stay in their villages. Committee staff believe that this is the most direct aid that they can give to help the resistance, given their humanitarian framework. They try to give priority to areas most damaged by the war, to those most affected by the drought, and to those that were food deficit areas even before the war. An important criterion is whether the commander is reliable. They may make a grant to a commander from an area that is not especially damaged on the grounds that he will use the funds properly. As staff point out, there are desperately needy people in all areas. Like the Swedish Committee, the Norwegians are now encouraging commanders to use their food aid grants in more productive ways, initiating small income generating projects or paying for labor on public works.

In granting food aid, the Norwegian Committee follows cross-checking procedures very similar to those of the Swedish Committee. They cannot afford the manpower to do such extensive checking and so therefore have an arrangement with the Swedes that they can use the Swedish Committee's ten investigators when necessary. They also start with a small grant to test the commander. After providing assistance they inform the commander's party so that the latter knows who is getting what kind of assistance.

Agricultural Assistance

With respect to development assistance, the Committee

believes in concentrating its efforts in order to increase impact and to allow better management with limited staff resources. Accordingly, it has chosen to focus its efforts on one area of Ghazni, with a population of about 200,000. The Committee began by sending medical teams to the area and found the commander so well organized and concerned about the welfare of the civilian population that the area seemed a prime candidate for other forms of assistance. The Committee has now provided pumps and generators to nineteen villages where the villagers have dug hand-dug wells. It plans to supply more pumps and would like to provide a drill for well-drilling. Manpower is becoming a problem in the area so it becomes harder to procure enough to dig a well by hand. If they have adequate funding, they will hire a Norwegian specialist to train locals in well-drilling. In 1987, the Committee also began a program to repair karezes. The local administration selected 61 karezes which were not to badly destroyed and could therefore be made functional without too great a problem.

The Committee provided a small amount of food aid to the area last year, for families which had lost their breadwinner, and they plan to do so again this year. This is not an area of desperate need, however. The committee also supplies medicines and has trained local vaccinators. In 1987, 6500 children were immunized, and the last 4000 are due to receive the third in the series this March. The Committee also supports schools in the area.

The Committee does not have staff in Ghazni but sends in Norwegian medical teams three times a year. These teams stay up to three months and they check on other aspects of the assistance program. The Committee administers their aid through the area's Agriculture, Health and Education Committees. These were pre-existing organizations formed under the aegis of the local commander, who is more of a civilian administrator than military leader because he is too old to take part in any combat.

The Committee also supports agriculture in one area in Kunar. One party came to the Norwegians requesting help for the area. When the Committee agreed, the party appointed a project leader from the area. The Committee supplies seed (wheat and some maize) and fertilizer, both bought in Pakistan, and if funding is adequate this year would like to provide oxen. The Committee is also cooperating with the Swedish Committee on a project for settling internal refugees in Badakhshan. This project supplies seed, fertilizer and livestock to one commander.

Other Activities

As noted above, the Committee also provides assistance to the

education and health sectors.

THE SWEDISH COMMITTEE

The Swedish Committee began working in 1982. Approximately one half of its budget is devoted to medical assistance, while the rest is devoted to food aid, the Afghan Education Committee and the Afghan Agricultural Survey. 80 - 90% of the Committee's funding is from the Swedish government, while the remainder is collected from the Swedish public. The Agricultural Survey receives funding from USAID. Through 1987, SCA has expended $3 million on cross-border activities. Its expected budget for 1988 equals $3 million. The Committee worked in approximately 22 provinces in 1987.

"Cash for Food" and Emergency Assistance

The Committee sees food aid as a form of emergency relief for those most hurt in the war. In 1983 and 1984, relatively small amounts (total - $ 187,000) of CFF were granted. Since 1985, the amount of funding available has become more substantial. Approximately 40% of the Committee's annual budget is expended on food aid. The Committee receives more request for help than it can meet and so operates partly on a "first-come, first-served basis." It has, however, aimed at a fair distribution of its aid across the country and among the parties and has tried to work with the most influential general commanders, who control large areas. It has provided some food aid to almost every province, but has now given priority to the North, as an area of great hardship. Almost 60% has gone to provinces north of the Hindu Kush, while almost 25% has been sent to Badghis, Herat and Farah. The southern and central provinces received help for the first time in 1986.

The Committee tries to assist areas in the wake of heavy attacks in order to prevent the creation of additional displaced persons and refugees. It provided such emergency assistance to Logar (Rs. 3.5 million) and Ghazni in 1987. The previous year, the Committee assisted Nangarhar in the aftermath of Soviet carpet-bombing, and Takhar after an offensive there.

The Committee gives commanders considerable discretion in the use of the funds. They can give relatively few families who have lost everything substantial sums, or they can give smaller amounts to a larger number of families. The political pressures on the commanders are such that they are often obliged to follow the latter course. Last year, the

Committee began encouraging commanders to use food aid funds to pay for wage labour on local public works, to set up small income generating projects, and to assist agriculture. In Nangarhar, for example, the commander chose to use food aid funds to purchase fertilizer and for repairing a road. In Kabul province, needy families owning land have been supplied with seed, fertilizer and paid labor.

The Committee has established very careful procedures, detailed on pp. 10 and 13 of this report, for granting and following up on food aid. They do not use expatriates except on rare instances, but generally rely on the commander to transmit the money to his area. Cross-checking is done at several points in the process by a team of ten Afghan "detectives." The SCA is also now developing a cadre of Afghan monitors who can be sent to conduct on-the-spot monitoring. First grants and sometimes second grants are small and serve as pilots to determine if the commander's organization can handle and account for the funds. No system can operate perfectly in this environment, and the Committee has sometimes turned over funds to unreliable individuals. The Committee believes that its procedures are both prudent and sensible and that they would have to spend too great a share of their resources on control and monitoring if they were to try to avoid mistakes altogether. In the last annual report, the Committee concluded that 85% of the funds contributed were used properly. There is doubt about the remaining 15%. Some portion of that could have been used correctly, but the documentation received was poor, and cross-checking was not able to clarify the confusion.

The Committee plans to continue to grant food aid, believing that it is critical in the aftermath of heavy fighting and that it is sometimes the only way to help internal refugees and others who have lost all their resources and assets. The Committee is also providing rock drills for the digging of caves for safe shelter and storage.

Agricultural Assistance

The Committee has contributed funds to other PVOs implementing agriculture projects, such as the BIA seed project in Kunar, and is interested in collaborating on other projects. It has provided funds for seed to Faryab; sheep, re-terracing and oxen to Badakhshan; and fertilizer to Kunar. It has also undertaken a karez cleaning project in Wardak.

The Committee has decided in future to allocate more funds for agriculture, and to try to shift from cash handouts to beneficiaries to assistance with income generating projects. They hope to spend between one-third and one-half of their CFF funds on establishing up to ten agriculture projects this year. They consider the karez-cleaning project

in Wardak to be the first such project. Finally, they hope to look more closely at the possibility of setting up projects that would enable refugees to return home.

Staffing

The Committee has one of the largest staffs among organizations providing cross-border assistance, with a total of 105 employees, five of whom are Swedes. Approximately 50 of those personnel are administrative staff, the rest are project personnel.